



REOPENING GUIDANCE MOVIE THEATERS

Reopening movie theaters safely and responsibly is vital for both the local economy and the well-being of our community. As movie theaters reopen, there are important steps you can take to minimize the spread of COVID-19 in Harris County.

Recommendations Before Reopening

- Conduct routine HVAC maintenance and change air filters
- Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect all areas including theaters, offices, bathrooms, and concessions areas, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces
 - Clean dirty surfaces with soap and water
 - Next, disinfect surfaces using products that meet [EPA's criteria for use against SARS-Cov-2](#), the virus that causes COVID-19, and that are appropriate for the surface
 - Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products for concentration, application method, contact time, and required personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Operations can begin after completing the cleaning and disinfection procedures

Help Protect Employees and Customers

- To help protect moviegoers at higher risk of severe illness, consider having dedicated screening hours
- [Follow CDC guidance for cleaning and disinfection, handwashing, social distancing, and respiratory etiquette](#)
- Screen employees before entering the building for symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, shortness of breath, or known close contact with a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19
- Have employees wash hands when entering the building and provide hand sanitizer at accessible locations

- Make sure soap and paper towels are available at all restroom hand sinks. Keep hand sanitizer available for staff and customers
- Using floor tape or visual markers to ensure staff and customers are practicing social distancing especially in areas where lines may form
- Require all employees to wear face coverings such as a mask, cloth mask, bandana, scarf or shield
- If using gloves, make sure gloves are in good condition, no holes or visible dirt
- Change gloves often or after each task, washing hands each time gloves are changed
- Encourage employees and customers to practice social distancing and stay 6 ft apart with floor tape or visual markers
- Increase routine cleaning frequencies and use approved disinfectants for restrooms, high traffic, and high touch customer use areas
- Use contactless payment options if available or take steps to minimize contact during transactions
- Close every other row in theaters and provide signage to customers to keep at least 2 empty seats between attendee groups
- Tables, if used, cannot seat more than 6 people
- Use disposable menus and discard after each use. Tables must not have condiments, silverware, glassware, napkins on unoccupied tables. Tables must be cleaned and sanitized after each use
- Provide single-use condiments only upon request
- Clean and disinfect tables, chairs, and any items that come into contact with customers between customer use

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Planning for Absenteeism

- Determine how you will operate with a reduced staff if employees cannot work due to illness, staying home to care for sick family members and those who must stay home to watch their children
- Prepare to institute flexible workplace and leave policies
- Cross-train employees to perform essential functions, so the workplace can operate even if key employees are absent

Free COVID-19 Testing is Available for Everyone

We encourage business owners and employees to get free testing at a testing site. The updated online self-assessment tool is confidential and designed to serve the public in the Greater Houston area. To register for testing, visit <http://covidcheck.hctx.net/>. For those who do not have access to the online tool, call **832-927-7575** to get scheduled for testing. Free testing is available regardless of citizenship status and for those who are uninsured.

Employees should **not** return to work if they are sick. If an employee has a sick family member they live with or has been near an ill person, they should notify their employer immediately.

Please go to www.hcphtx.org for any additional information on how to keep yourself or employees safe during this pandemic.

*People at higher risk for severe illness are those who are 65 or older, especially those with chronic lung disease; moderate to severe asthma; chronic heart disease; severe obesity; diabetes; chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis; liver disease; or weakened immune system.

Additional Information is Available

[FDA/NRA Guidance](#)

[The Governor's Report to Open Texas](#)

[CDC Business & Employer Resources](#)

CHECKLIST FOR MINIMUM RECOMMENDATIONS

Health Protocols for Serving Your Customers

- ☐ Movie theaters are encouraged to utilize remote ticketing options to help manage capacity limitations
- ☐ Ensure proper spacing between patrons in the movie theater:
 - ☐ Keep at least two empty seats (or 6 ft separation) between parties in any row, except as follows:
 - Two or more members of the same household can sit adjacent to one another, with two seats (or 6 ft separation) empty on either side
 - Two individuals who are not members of the same household but who are attending together can sit adjacent to one another, with two seats (or 6 ft separation) empty on either side
- ☐ Alternate rows between customers (every other row left empty)
- ☐ Disinfect seats and frequently touched areas between screenings
- Movie theaters providing food service to patrons:
 - ☐ Do not leave condiments, silverware, flatware, glassware, or other traditional tabletop items on an unoccupied table
 - ☐ Provide condiments only upon request, and in single-use (non-reusable) portions
 - ☐ Clean and disinfect the area used for dining (table, etc.) after each group of customers depart the theater
 - ☐ Use disposable menus (new for each patron)
 - ☐ If the theater allows customers to write down their food orders inside the theater, provide pencils and notepads that cannot be used by other customers
 - ☐ Have wait staff sanitize or wash hands between interactions with customers
- ☐ Movie theaters with counter food service for patrons:
 - ☐ Provide condiments or flatware only in single-use, individually-wrapped items, and provide condiments only upon request
 - ☐ Have employees follow proper food-handling protocols
 - ☐ Disinfect any items that come into contact with customers
 - ☐ Use contactless payment options or limit contact during payments

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Health Protocols for Your Theater Facilities

- ☐ Regularly and frequently clean and disinfect any commonly touched surfaces, such as doorknobs, tables, chairs, and restrooms
- ☐ Disinfect any items that come into contact with customers
- ☐ Make hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, soap and water, or similar disinfectant readily available to employees and customers

Health Protocols for Your Employees

- ☐ Train all employees on appropriate cleaning and disinfection, how to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases by washing hands frequently, and covering coughs and sneezes
- ☐ Have employees maintain at least 6 ft of separation from other individuals. If such distancing is not feasible, rigorously practice measures such as face-covering, hand hygiene, cough etiquette, cleanliness, and sanitation
- ☐ Have employees wash or sanitize their hands upon entering the facility and between interactions with customers
- ☐ Consistent with the actions taken by many retailers across the state, consider having all employees wear cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth). If available, employees should consider wearing non-medical grade face masks
- ☐ Screen employees before coming into the building:
- ☐ Send home any employee who has any of the following new or worsening signs or symptoms of possible COVID-19:
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Chills
 - Repeated shaking with chills
 - Muscle pain
 - Headache
 - Sore throat
 - Loss of taste or smell
 - Diarrhea
 - Feeling feverish or measured temperature greater than $> 100.4^{\circ}\text{F}$
 - Known close contact with a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19

- ☐ Visibly placed signage at the retailer to remind everyone of the best hygiene practices
- ☐ Clean and disinfect the area used for dining (table, etc.) after each group of customers depart, including the disinfecting of tables, chairs, stalls, and countertops
- ☐ Do not allow employees with new or worsening signs or symptoms listed above to return to work until:
 - ☐ If the employee is diagnosed with COVID-19, they may return to work when all three of the following criteria are met:
 - At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared
 - At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (having no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications)
 - The individual has improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath)
 - ☐ If the employee has COVID-19 symptoms and does not get tested or evaluated by a medical professional, the individual is assumed to have COVID-19. The individual may not return to work until the individual has completed the same three-step criteria listed above
 - ☐ If the employee or volunteer has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to work before completing the above self-isolation period, the individual must obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual to return to work based on an alternative diagnosis.
- ☐ Do not allow an employee with known close contact to a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19 to return to work until the end of the 14 days self-quarantine period from the last date of exposure (with an exception granted for healthcare workers and critical infrastructure workers)

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